

# SEATTLE CITYWIDE DESIGN GUIDELINES



Council Bill 117619  
Feb. 13, 2013



# Design Review

## Created in 1994 to:

- Encourage better design & site planning that enhances the character of the city & ensures that new development fits sensitively into neighborhoods
- Provide flexibility in the application of development standards
- Improve communication and participation among developers, neighbors, and the City early in the design and siting of new development



# Role of Guidelines

- Design Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings are the backbone of the Design Review Program
- Used by neighborhoods, Design Review Boards & City staff to judge the merits of proposed projects
- 18 neighborhoods have supplemental guidelines
- Downtown has separate guidelines

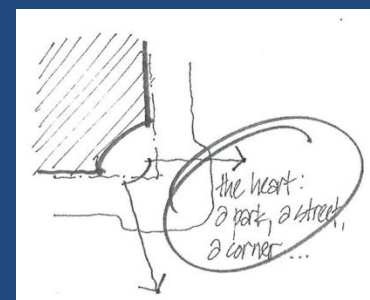
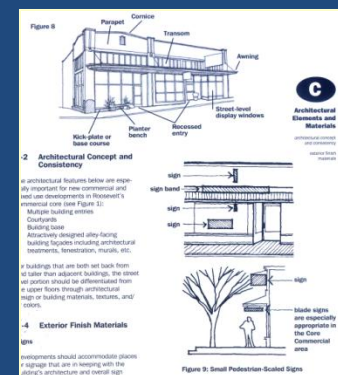
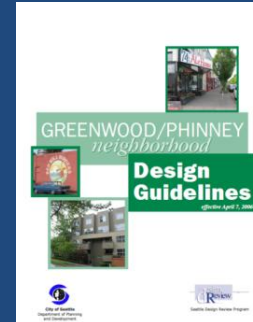
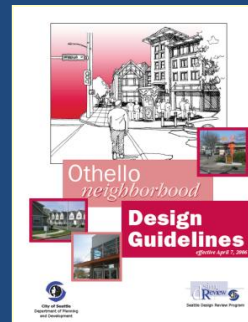


- Incorporate lessons learned from neighborhood-specific guidelines & 15+ years of project review

- Maximize effectiveness
- Increase clarity & ease of use

- Focus on citywide guidelines

- Include revisions to neighborhood guidelines for compatibility



# Update

## Update Process

1. **Analyze** existing guidelines for what works/doesn't work.
2. **Research** other guidelines nationally & internationally.
3. **Compile** “lessons learned” from drafting neighborhood guidelines.
4. **Define** principles to evaluate new solutions against.
5. **Share** drafts, **listen** to feedback and **revise**.

## New Guidelines

1. **Infuse** sustainability throughout
2. **Simplify**
3. **Eliminate** redundancies
4. **Design** new graphic “look”
5. **Sort and categorize**—no single right way to do this

# Principles

*The revised design guidelines should...*

- Be clear, simply stated & easy to use in order to be effective
- Reflect, support & facilitate the architectural design process and the City's design review process
- Be timeless and timely; embodying key principles of good design while reflecting best practices & current issues
- Help create better local solutions and higher quality projects
- Respect the history of current guidelines & relationship between citywide & neighborhood-specific guidelines





# Timeline & Outreach

## Major Milestones

- 2008 to 2010 – public outreach, background research, drafting
- April 2011 – SEPA review public draft released
- Oct. 2012 – Final documents prepared and submitted to Council

## Groups Included

- Public meeting attendees
- Community Councils
- Design professionals (AIA)
- Planning and Design Commissions
- Design Review Board members
- Architecture and Planning Consultants



# Analysis and Findings

from Weinstein A/U Report

*Existing citywide design guidelines are generally standing the test of time, but there is room for improvement!*

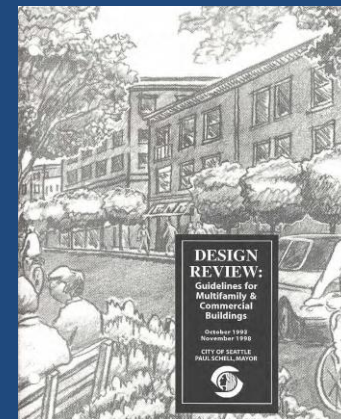
- Explanations and graphics need updating
- Important issues missing or not directly addressed
- Redundancies
- Lack of hierarchy among the 31 guidelines
- Public realm should be prioritized
- Guidelines and the Design Review process need to be better integrated, especially with the neighborhood-specific guidelines
- Format doesn't encourage conceptual thinking; focuses more on building elements and detailing



# Design Guidelines Compared

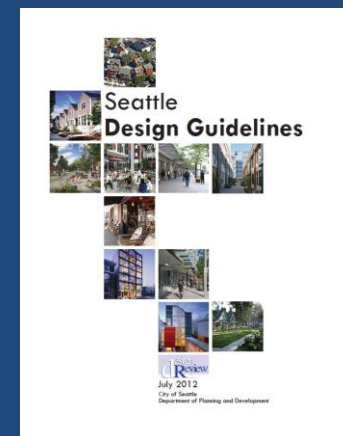
## Existing:

- Drafted in 1993/4, added to in 1998
- 5 categories
- 31 guidelines
- 19 “sub-issues”
- Line drawings and sketches
- Served as inspiration for subsequent neighborhood-specific guidelines



## Proposed:

- 3 categories
- 11 guidelines
- 40 “sub-issues”
- Primarily photos
- Inspired by neighborhood-specific guidelines



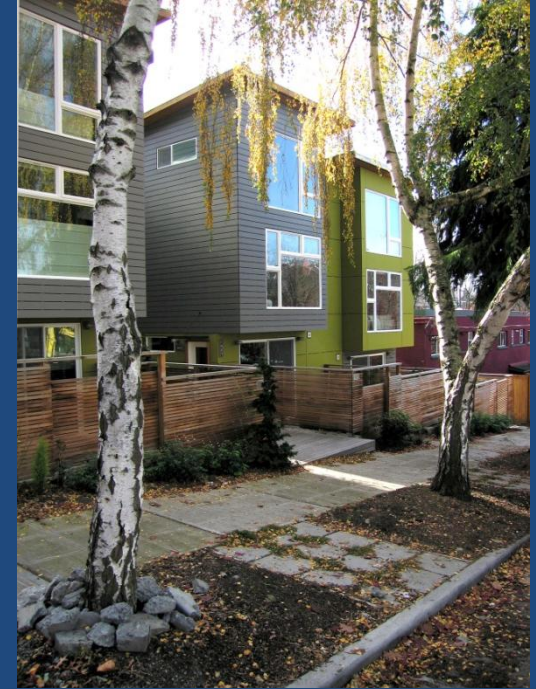
# Guideline Categories and Organization

## Existing categories:

- A. Site Planning (10 guidelines)
- B. Height, Bulk, and Scale (1 guideline)
- C. Architectural Elements and Materials (5 guidelines)
- D. Pedestrian Environment (12 guidelines)
- E. Landscaping (3 guidelines)

## Proposed categories

- CS. Context and Site (3 guidelines)
- PL. Public Life (4 guidelines)
- DC. Design Concept (4 guidelines)



# Sample guideline: Context and Site

Roughly equivalent to old guideline sections:

- A. Site Planning
- B. Height, Bulk, and Scale
- C. Architectural Concept.

Primary difference?

- Still the heart of the guidelines approach; e.g. that each development is part of the greater city—no building stands alone.
- Broadened to include whole city (as appropriate) and neighborhood vs. immediately adjacent properties.
- Wider range for what constitutes a “good fit” by embracing contemporary architectural styles, considering more ways to transition than simply stepping up (or down) in height.

# CS. Context and Site Guidelines

## CS1. Natural Systems and Site Features

Use natural systems and features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.



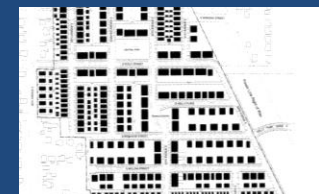
## CS2. Urban Pattern and Form

Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.



## CS3. Architectural Context and Character

Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.



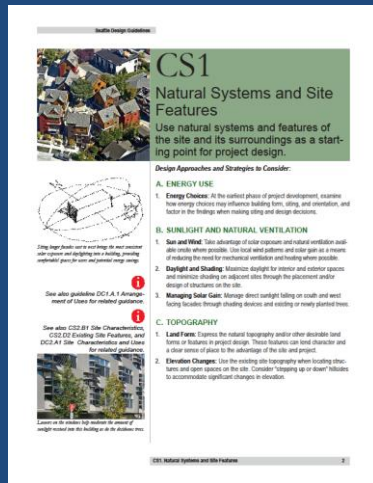
# Updated Guideline Format

## Main body of page:

- Guideline number
- Guideline title
- Guideline itself
- Detailed guidance for each sub-issue
- Photos and drawings with captions—to illustrate key points

## Left column:

- Photo portraying the primary idea behind the guideline
- Cross-reference notes
- Additional resources to consult





Thank you.